

DRAWINGS

In paragraph 1, the Examiner objected to the drawings because "figures a, b, c, etc are not labeled." Applicants do not understand which figures need to be labeled "figures a, b, c, etc." Nowhere in the application are figures identified in this manner. If the Examiner maintains this rejection, Applicants request further clarification as to which figures need to be relabeled and why.

REMARKS

In the aforementioned Office Action, claims 1-21 were examined. Claims 1-11 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Pollock (U.S. Patent No. 5,271,307) in view of Storey (U.S. Patent No. 4,487,100). Claims 12 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Pollock in view of Storey and Chang (U.S. Patent No. 6,118,057). In view of the following remarks, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections and request reconsideration of the application.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103

In paragraph 2, the Examiner asserts that Pollock uses

a guitar bridge combined tailpiece comprising a long narrow base piece with top, bottom, and rear surfaces; a round vertical alignment hole at each end of the base piece, the vertical alignment hole being formed from the top surface through the bottom surface and comprising first and second alignment cylindrically round posts to snugly fit in the vertical holes.

The Examiner further asserts that Pollock "further discloses the use of first and second adjustment posts (24) to fit [sic] in the vertical alignment holes for mounting to the body of a guitar and string holes (30)." The Examiner, however, states that Pollock "does not disclose the user of a setscrew hole in each end of the base piece

being formed from an outer vertical edge to each vertical alignment hole.” Instead, the Examiner relies on Storey to “disclose[s] the use of a guitar bridge assembly with a setscrew hole in each end of the base piece being formed from an outer vertical edge to each vertical alignment hole.” The Examiner further asserts that “Storey further discloses the use of first and second set screws (30) to fit in the setscrew holes.”

The Examiner states that it would have been obvious “to modify the bridge device as disclosed by Pollock with the setscrew holes as disclosed by Storey in order to provide camming action for bridge and tailpiece elements.” Applicants traverse.

Pollock teaches a guitar and guitar bridge assembly with four main sections that fit together to provide enhanced harmonics for a jazz guitar. A first base and a second base are adhesively, or otherwise, adjoined having an anchor plate in between the two bases. The anchor plate includes openings for fastener members (24) to fasten the anchor plate to the guitar body (11). A bone plate (29) is also attached to the guitar bridge assembly (10) for directing guitar strings.

Claim 1 of the present application initially recites “*a long, narrow base piece* with top, bottom, front, and rear surfaces.” Even this first element fails to be taught or suggested by Pollock. First, Pollock does not teach a long, narrow base piece, but rather various pieces having their own surfaces. Although these various pieces may be joined to make the guitar bridge assembly (10) described in Pollock, the guitar bridge assembly (10) is just as described, an “assembly” and not a “long, narrow base piece.” Thus, Pollock fails to suggest Claim 1 from the start.

Second, Claim 1 also recites “*a vertical alignment hole at each end of said base piece*, said vertical alignment hole being formed from the top surface through the bottom surface.” Pollock does discuss a first and a second base body. However, neither of these base bodies includes “vertical alignment hole[s]” of any type. As

discussed above, Pollock simply does not describe a single base piece and thus it cannot describe a vertical alignment hole formed through that base piece.

Further, while the anchor plate (20) described in Pollock includes fastener apertures directing one of the fastener members into the guitar body, the “fastener apertures” cannot be said to be the same as the vertical alignment hole in Claim 1 since the fastener apertures extend only through the anchor plate (20) and not through either the first base body or the second base body (25). Thus, the “fastener apertures” fail to be formed “from the top surface through the bottom surface” of the base piece.

With respect to Storey, a combined bridge and tailpiece assembly is taught. A tailpiece block is secured to the body of a musical instrument and a tailpiece member is attached to the tailpiece block. An adjustable bridge is connected with the tailpiece block as well. The Examiner asserts that Storey discloses “a setscrew hole in each end of said base piece being formed from an outer vertical edge to each vertical alignment hole.” However, setscrew holes are not taught by Storey for a bridge base piece. Instead, Storey describes openings in the tailpiece block, rather than in a bridge base piece.

Further, the Examiner directs Applicants attention to figure 2 in Storey, noting that Storey “further discloses the use of first and second set screws (30) to fit in the setscrew holes.” However, the setscrew holes for the first and second set screws (30) fail to extend to a vertical alignment hole, as in the present application. Accordingly, Storey fails to teach or suggest “a setscrew hole in each end of said base piece being formed from an outer vertical edge to each vertical alignment hole.” Neither Pollock nor Storey, singularly or in combination, teach Claim 1 or any other claims set forth in the present application.

Although the Examiner asserts that Pollock and Storey may be combined to render claims 1-11 and 21 of the present application obvious, Pollock and Storey are,

respectfully, not properly combinable, nor is there any motivation to combine. Storey teaches away from the guitar bridge assembly described in Pollock and instead describes an adjustable bridge and rotatable tailpiece to vary the tension on the strings. Pollock, on the other hand, teaches a guitar bridge with a second plate portion "for securement of the strings thereto to provide unitary organization for the mounting and bridging of guitar strings relative to the guitar structure" (column 4, lines 5-8).

Even if Pollock and Storey were combined, the combination would not read on claim 1 of the present application nor function properly. First, neither Pollock nor Storey discloses a single base piece. Second, a set screw hole to an alignment hole is not disclosed in either reference. Accordingly, any combination of the inventions disclosed in Pollock and Storey would not function properly or result in a guitar bridge and tailpiece that read on claim 1 of the present application. As such, claim 1 should be allowable.

With respect to claim 8, Pollock does not teach a tailpiece. Consequently, Pollock does not teach or suggest any of the claim elements set forth in Claim 8. While Storey does teach a combined bridge and tailpiece assembly, the tailpiece portion fails to teach or suggest the elements set forth in Claim 8. Further, as discussed above with respect to claim 1, Pollock and Storey are not properly combinable, nor do they disclose all elements of the present claim. That is, no disclosure of a base piece or setscrew holes formed to the vertical hole or slot exists in Pollock or Storey.

With respect to claims 12 and 13, the Examiner asserts that while Pollock and Storey "do not specifically disclose the use of a string diameter hole that is larger than a string hole or slots in order to receive a balled end of a string", Chang does

disclose “the use of a guitar bridge base with the user of a string diameter hold that is larger than a string hole or slots in order to receive a balled end of a string (see figure 3.” Claims 12 and 13 are dependent upon claim 1 and should be allowable for similar reasons cited above with respect to claim 1.

With respect to claim 21, as discussed above, Pollock fails to teach or suggest the guitar bridge or the tailpiece set forth in the present application. Storey also fails to teach or suggest the guitar bridge or the tailpiece set forth in the present application. Pollock and Storey are also not properly combinable. Accordingly, Pollock and Storey, singularly or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the “improved guitar bridge and tailpiece combination” set forth in claim 21.

Accordingly, the rejection of independent Claims 1, 8, and 21 should be withdrawn. Additionally, since dependent claims 2-7 and 9-13 depend directly from independent claim 1 and 8, respectively, these dependent claims are also patentably distinct over the cited art. For these reasons, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the 35 U.S.C. §103 rejection.

Allowable Subject Matter

In paragraph 3, the Examiner objects to claims 3, 4, 6, and 10 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but says the claims “would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.” Applicants thank the Examiner for providing suggestions for allowable subject matter. Respectfully, however, Applicants traverse the objection to claims 3, 4, 6, and 10 since Applicants believe that the base claims should be allowable.

In paragraph 4, the Examiner indicated that claimed 14-20 are allowed. Applicants thank the Examiner for pointing out the allowable subject matter in these claims.

Conclusion

Based on the above remarks, Applicants believe that the rejections in the Office Action of December 23, 2004 are fully overcome, and that the application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner has questions regarding the case, he is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the number given below.

Respectfully submitted,

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